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Identical letters dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the forty-third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (S/2017/144) (S/2017/794).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates the concerns that it raised in its previous responses to reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the aforementioned Security Council resolutions. The authors of the reports must address those concerns with great seriousness if they are to depart from the politicized manner in which previous reports were prepared and produce a report that addresses the reality of the humanitarian situation in Syria in an objective, professional and credible manner.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the so-called international coalition must immediately halt the massacres, acts of destruction and sabotage, and violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights that it is committing under the pretext of countering terrorism, because they are war crimes and crimes against humanity. The number of Syrian civilians killed now stands at several thousand, while the extent of the destruction to vital infrastructure is so great that it is impossible to assess at present. The Government also stresses that Turkish regime forces must halt their attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity and unity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and calls upon the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility in that regard.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that donors must fulfil the commitments that they have made at donor conferences. Doing so would improve humanitarian access, ensure that more assistance is available to needy Syrian civilians and help rebuild infrastructure, thereby enabling displaced persons to return to their areas once security and stability have been restored thanks to the efforts of the Syrian State. Certain States have made the financing of humanitarian work in Syria contingent on political conditions. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that doing so is contrary to the principles and rules of humanitarian work and undermines the work of the United Nations in that field.

The Syrian Government reiterates that the United Nations and its Member States must respect fully the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, stop

supporting terrorism and armed terrorist groups, and desist from using such designations as "non-State armed opposition" and "the moderate armed opposition" that might endow those groups with some legitimacy. They should not pay heed or bow to the demands of other actors, such as the "local authorities" that the authors mention, nor should they take any measures that could under any circumstances be interpreted as recognition of or legitimizing such actors. Doing so would contravene all Security Council resolutions that emphasize the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and the unity of its people.

The Syrian Government reaffirms the vital role of the Syrian State and its institutions in providing various services to civilians, whether they are in areas under its control or areas where armed groups are deployed, and in facilitating the work of international humanitarian organizations. Moreover, the ongoing efforts of the State and its allies to counter terrorism has greatly improved humanitarian access, restored security and stability, and enabled displaced persons to return to many areas.

The Government regrets that the Secretariat officials continue to overuse the phrase "besieged areas" and provide misleading information in that regard in order to accuse the Syrian Government of being deliberately negligent. It is also surprised that Secretariat officials note that the inhabitants of Raqqah are besieged from within and being used as human shields by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), yet they fail to mention that armed terrorist groups are besieging civilians and using them as human shields in other areas, or that ISIL and Levant Liberation Organization (formerly the Nusrah Front) terrorists and other armed terrorist groups are laying siege to other areas, such as Dayr al-Zawr, the towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya, eastern Ghutah, Idlib and others.

The United Nations must stop ignoring the fact that the unilateral coercive economic measure imposed on the Syrian people by the United States, the European Union and other States have had a catastrophic effect on the economic, social and humanitarian well-being and the health of Syrians. The Syrian Government once again calls for those measures, which violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations, to be lifted immediately.

The Syrian Government reiterates that, to date, it has approved nine individual requests from the World Health Organization (WHO) to deliver shipments of medical aid to various parts of Syria, not five requests as stated in the report.[1]

The report continues to rely on sources that lack credibility, and it repeatedly and unnecessarily cites inaccurate figures and statistics with respect to such matters as the issuance of entry permits and visas, even though United Nations officials have praised the Syrian Government for the efforts it has made and its cooperation in that regard.

The Syrian Government rejects the Secretariat's continual promotion of cross-border assistance, and reiterates that such assistance is ineffective, given that most of it falls into the hands of armed terrorist groups deployed in the targeted areas. The Syrian Government reiterates that the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic is still incapable of verifying that cross-border

[1] Approved WHO requests: tuberculosis medicines for eastern Ghutah in Rif Dimashq; medical aid for Dayr al-Zawr; medical aid for Adra al-Ummaliyah, the Assad suburb, Dayr Ali, Jabal al-Ward, Manin, Qastal, Badda, Rawdah, Sa'sa', Talfita and Bludan in Rif Dimashq; medical aid for Musaymah, Qunayyah and Khabab in Dar'a; medical aid for Qadsayya, Wadi Barada and Ayn al-Fijah in Rif Dimashq; medical aid for eastern Ghutah in Rif Dimashq; medical aid for Mayadin in Dayr al-Zawr; medical aid for Ayn al-Arab in Aleppo; kidney dialysis sessions in Duma, Rif Dimashq; and medical aid for Ghutah in Rif Dimashq.

assistance is reaching its rightful beneficiaries. We remind you that the Bab al-Hawa, Bab al-Salamah and Ramtha crossings are also entry points for arms, materiel and ammunition being smuggled to armed terrorist groups in Syria. The Government strongly rejects the authors' continued bias in favour of Turkey and Jordan when discussing the delivery of cross-border assistance. The Syrian Government reiterates that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent stands ready to monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance to its intended recipients, but the Secretariat has in the past rejected that proposal.

The Syrian Government categorically rejects any efforts to circumvent the mandate set out in Security Council resolution 2165 (2014). The Fish Khabur border crossing in Hasakah governorate is not mentioned in that resolution. Accordingly, the Government rejects any efforts by the United Nations or other international organizations to bring assistance through that crossing point or any other illegal crossing point.

The Syrian Government reiterates its stated position regarding the International Criminal Court and the calls that have been made to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to that Court, and stresses that the Court is not competent to address the situation in Syria. Moreover, the Court has lost all credibility and has been transformed into a political tool that is used by certain parties to attack specific States for sordid political ends that have nothing to do with the requirements of justice. The Government also reiterates the substance of the letter dated 20 February 2017 that it sent to the Secretary-General (A/71/799) regarding the serious legal flaws in the General Assembly resolution on an International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on intra-Syrian dialogue under Syrian leadership without foreign intervention and without preconditions. We remind the Secretariat that the success of the political process and any significant improvement in the humanitarian situation will depend, above all, on creating a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism and on an immediate end to the unilateral coercive economic measures being imposed on the Syrian people. The Syrian Government has played a constructive role in the success of the Astana and Geneva meetings.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to compel the States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to stop providing such groups with any form of support or financing, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and the financing thereof, in particular resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). Compliance with and enforcement of those resolutions is the key to resolving the situation in Syria and delivering unprecedented humanitarian assistance to those in need.

I should be grateful if this letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative